

New Program Proposal
Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication – Major in Visual
Communications
USC-Columbia

Summary

USC-Columbia requests approval to offer a program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Mass Communication with a Major in Visual Communications, to be implemented in Fall 2004.

The proposal was submitted for Commission review on November 3, 2003. The proposal was reviewed without substantive comment and voted upon favorably by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs at its meeting on January 21, 2004. The USC Board of Trustees approved the proposal on April 21, 2004.

The purpose of the program is to prepare students to enter the fields of photojournalism and graphic and multimedia design in a mass media setting. The need for the program is based on the increased use of digital imaging techniques and web-based delivery for media content. The new media strategies for print and electronic journalists, public relations practitioners, and those who work in advertising demand strong skills in visual communications and fluency in communicating through a variety of channels and formats. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in the field of design and visual communications is projected to grow at an above average rate through 2010. The program will also offer an added dimension to existing majors in advertising, public relations, and print and electronic journalism.

The curriculum consists of 126 credit hours. Of these, 90 credits are in general university requirements, 12 credits are in Journalism and Mass Communication core courses; 21 credits are in upper-division courses in media graphics and design, photojournalism, and multimedia; and three credits are in electives.

Several institutions in the state offer graphic design programs. Most of these are housed in fine arts departments and have a fine arts emphasis. Clemson University has a Graphics Communication program, with an industrial production and management emphasis, and Winthrop offers a Visual Communication Design major within the Department of Art. Winthrop's program does not include the photojournalism emphasis or requirements for core courses in journalism which are defining components of the proposed USC program.

No new faculty will be added in the first year to meet the instructional needs in the proposed program. Three of the four faculty teach in other areas within the school, however, and as their instructional load increases it is anticipated that at least one new faculty member will be added to offset the loss of instruction time in other areas. There are currently four faculty (3.5 FTE). This will increase to five faculty (4.5 FTE) in FY 2005-06 and will remain constant at that level.

Enrollment in the proposed program is estimated to begin at 30 (Headcount and FTE) in Fall 2004 and increase to 75 (Headcount and FTE) in Fall 2006. This is based on offering three to four Visual Communications courses per semester in 2004 and four to five in following years. The School of Journalism estimates that 15-18% of Journalism majors will be Visual Communication majors. If met, these enrollment projections exceed the Commission's minimum productivity standards.

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is currently accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. ACEJMC standards specifically mention visual communication courses as an important aspect of a strong journalism education; however, they do not accredit programs at the major level. The school will undergo reaccreditation in the 2004/2005 academic year.

The existing facilities are adequate to handle the anticipated growth of the program. Photo studio arrangements to handle instructional needs have been made with the Department of Art. In addition, it will be necessary to convert a computer lab into a third graphics lab and to purchase professional quality digital cameras, lighting equipment, and approximately 20 camera lens sets for student use. The total cost of these conversions and purchases will be approximately \$30,000 over five years. The University did not provide a quantitative analysis of library holdings against national standards but indicated that the holdings adequately support the teaching and research needs of the proposed major. There is no request for additional library support.

New costs for the program are estimated to begin at \$15,000 in year one and include equipment (\$10,000) and facilities (photo studio rent of \$5,000). Estimated costs increase to \$57,000 in year 2 and continue at that level through year 5. This includes faculty salaries (\$47,000), equipment (\$5,000), and facilities (\$5,000). The total estimated new cost is \$243,000 for the program's first five years.

Shown below are the estimated Mission Resource Requirement (MRR) costs to the state and new costs not funded by the MRR associated with implementation of the proposed program for its first five years. Also shown are the estimated revenues projected under the MRR and the Resource Allocation Plan as well as student tuition.

Year	Estimated MRR Cost for Proposed Program	Extraordinary (Non-MRR) Costs for Proposed Program	Total Costs	State Appropriation	Tuition	Total Revenue
2004-05	\$414,960		\$414,960	\$0	\$302,089	\$302,089
2005-06	466,830		466,830	148,244	340,317	488,561
2006-07	622,440		622,440	166,658	453,133	619,792
2007-08	881,790		881,790	222,367	642,406	864,772
2008-09	881,790		881,790	314,903	642,406	957,308

These data demonstrate that if USC-Columbia can meet the projected student enrollments and contain costs as they are shown in the proposal, the program will be able to cover new costs with revenues it generates by the fifth year of its implementation.

In summary, USC-Columbia will offer a program leading to the Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication with a Major in Visual Communications that will allow students to obtain the theory and skills necessary to create informative editorial and persuasive messages for organizational communication and the mass media. The University is proposing to combine a strong core of journalism courses with digital and graphic design elements to create a unique major that will prepare its graduates to compete effectively in the current and future media market.

Recommendation

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing recommends that the Commission approve USC-Columbia's proposed program leading to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism and Mass Communication with a Major in Visual Communications for implementation in Fall 2004, provided that no "unique cost" or other special state funding be required or requested.